



WINTER 2025

WISCONSIN LUTHERAN SEMINARY SPOTLIGHT

SECOND SEMESTER ENROLLMENT

Enrollment at the seminary is the highest it has been in fifteen years. The second semester began with 47 first-year students, 36 in their second year, 39 serving as vicars, and 25 seniors. Counting one student who is serving in an emergency call and another who was granted a one-year leave of absence, seminary enrollment stands at 149. In addition, a student from our sister church in Germany is spending the year on campus. Early estimates suggest that the incoming class in fall 2025 will be larger than the graduating class.

FACULTY RETIREMENTS

Professor John Schuetze, who served at the seminary for 28 years, retired at the end of December 2024. During his time on the faculty, he taught courses in systematic theology, pastoral theology, and counseling, while also serving as campus counselor and registrar, among other duties. He is living in Tennessee and will continue to teach online courses in the STM program.

Professor Bill Tackmier will retire at the end of June after 15 years of service on the seminary campus. He has taught courses in Old Testament and homiletics and is currently serving as academic dean. He and his wife, Dorcas, who worked in the seminary library, will be living in South Bend, Indiana, in retirement. Professor Tackmier will teach some face-to-face courses in the STM program.



CALL ACCEPTED

Mr. Sean Young, who has served as the WELS Director of Mission Operations since May 2012, has accepted the Lord's call to serve as the director of mission advancement. He will take up that work in the spring. He takes over the work from Mr. Kevin Keller, who was hired in 2005 to establish the mission advancement office. The Lord has graciously poured out great blessings on Mr. Keller's work over the last 20 years.

WINTERIM

During early January, Winterim—the two-week session between semesters—gives students who choose to stay on campus an opportunity to study in areas not normally part of the seminary curriculum. This year 36 students participated in learning opportunities that took them off campus, whether to participate in outreach trips in Virginia, Texas, and Florida, or to walk in the footsteps of Paul in a trip to Greece and Italy.

Grow in Grace offered four continuing education courses during the first week of Winterim, with 24 pastors attending, more than any year in recent memory. Those Winterim courses are open to all WELS/ELS pastors. Next year's dates are January 5–9.

MISSION AND MINISTRY

The seminary held its 2025 Mission and Ministry seminar February 4–6. This annual three-day event provides students an opportunity to hear from a wide range of people in a variety of ministry settings. It's another chance for them to see the real-world gospel work for which their coursework is preparing them.

Attendees heard updates and stories from WELS World Missions, Home Missions, and Congregational Services under the theme of "God's Power, Our Mission." Each day of Mission and Ministry offered a keynote speaker, highlights from World Missions, Home Missions, and Congregational Services, and breakout sessions. Attendees also had the opportunity to explore displays by various synodical boards and commissions.



SATELLITES

This is the year for continuing education events for pastors in the districts. We call them satellites.

Satellites provide a unique opportunity for pastors to study together with a seminary professor or an adjunct instructor. Pastors wanting to take a course for credit will do some pre-course work, attend about 12 hours of class, and complete post-course assignments within a month. Pastors not taking the course for credit (audit) will do some pre-course work and participate in the classes. In previous years about one-third of the pastors have taken courses for credit and two-thirds have audited. If pastors have not taken a course for credit recently, we would encourage them to give it a try. The post-course assignments provide growth for the pastor and are often immediately practical for parish ministry.

The instructors of satellite courses are interested in the spiritual and professional growth of the pastors who take their courses. All courses are gospel-centered and mission-focused, with an emphasis on student learning. At the satellite events, time in class and time outside of class provide rich opportunity for brothers in faith and ministry to support and encourage each other and to enjoy the blessings of fellowship.

Most of the 12 districts are hosting at least one satellite course in 2025. Pastors are encouraged to enroll in a course for credit or audit. Pastors are welcome to attend any course in any district. This is especially helpful for pastors who are pursuing their STM degree or who want to take a specific course that pertains to their ministry.

The dates and places for nine 2025 satellite events have been set.

- Feb 4 – 6 in Pacific Northwest district in Seattle, WA
- April 29 – May 1 in Minnesota district in Rochester, MN
- May 28 – 30 in Dakota/Montana district in Sioux Falls, SD
- June 2 – 6 in Arizona/California district in Las Vegas, NV
- June 9 – 11 in North Atlantic district in Adamstown, MD
- June 9 – 12 in Pacific Northwest district in Tacoma, WA
- June 9 – 11 in Western Wisconsin district in Watertown, WI
- Oct 27 – 28 in South Central district in Rockwall, TX
- Oct 30 – 31 in Northern Wisconsin district in Appleton, WI

**The South Atlantic District and the Michigan District are also planning continuing education events in their districts in 2025, with dates and places still pending at this writing.

For information about these courses and events, contact us at growinggrace@wls.edu.

PASTORAL STUDIES INSTITUTE

a partnership of Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary and WELS Joint Missions

“After the fall, theologians are not born, but are made, namely taught by God through the written Word.”

~ John A. Quenstedt

How does God make a pastor? How does the seminary’s Pastoral Studies Institute (PSI) serve in making a pastor from a people group that is not part of our historical WELS community?

It begins with a prayer of thanks for WELS members who support the seminary and PSI’s important work. It is followed with a prayer for wisdom and insight that the PSI Team and its many pastor-instructors would be able to communicate the truths of God’s Word across cultures and language.

In North America, it begins with a pastor who has members of another people group in his congregation and the pastor notices that one of the men has the character and gifts for pastoral ministry. That local pastor is willing to serve as a PSI instructor to his member and mentor him in his PSI studies. Pastoral (and parental) encouragement of men for pastoral ministry is as important today as it was in the Apostle Paul’s day when he mentored young pastors Timothy and Titus.

Outside of North America, the making of a pastor continues with a PSI Team of three WLS professors willing to travel to other countries to teach classes in person. It can also mean altering their schedules to provide instruction via video to a classroom of men, through an interpreter, halfway around the world, during hours when their families are asleep. Wherever a PSI student is located, there are no tuition costs to the student or his congregation, thanks to the support of God’s people.

Whether a man is of traditional age attending WLS, or he is a PSI student from a people-group different than ours, the tool that sculpts and forms, shapes and fashions a confessional Lutheran pastor is the same tool that God has always used to communicate truth, create life, and equip his people to serve—his powerful Word.

Visit our website for the dates and times of our graduation week events on campus.

